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SUBJECT: IRAN: COUNCIL CONSIDERS ISRAELI SEIZURE OF ARMS

¶1. SUMMARY: In November 6 Security Council consultations, Ambassador DiCarlo drew the Council's attention to a letter from Israel reporting that Israel had found arms being shipped from Iran to Syria in violation of UNSCR 1747. She noted with concern that this was the third reported sanctions violation this year involving arms being shipped between Iran and Syria. The United States, DiCarlo said, expected the Security Council's Iran Sanctions Committee ("1737 Committee") to investigate. The UK and France also expressed concern and urged the Committee to review this pattern of reported violations. Russia agreed the 1737 Committee should investigate, adding that Israel had also suggested the shipment might violate UNSCR 1701's ban on arms transfers to non-state actors in Lebanon. China and Mexico said the Council should not discuss the matter until the Committee considers it. Libya alleged that Israel's actions were an attempt to divert attention from the Goldstone Report and that its inspection of the vessel was an illegal act of "piracy." Japanese Perm Rep Takasu, chair of the 1737 Committee, said the Committee had a duty to consider the matter. END SUMMARY.

¶2. In closed consultations of the Security Council on November 6, Ambassador DiCarlo drew the Council's attention to a letter the Israeli Perm Rep had sent the day before to the President of the Security Council about Israel's discovery of arms being shipped from Iran to Syria. She noted that Israel had reported its discovery of hundreds of tons of Iran-origin arms (rockets, missiles, mortars, grenades, small arms / light weapons) being shipped in violation of Security Council resolution 1747. (NOTE: UNSCR 1747 prohibits Iran from exporting arms and related materiel and the procurement of such items by other countries. END NOTE). DiCarlo highlighted the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL), which she said had been involved in previous sanctions violations. Noting that this was the third reported violation of UNSCR 1747 this year involving arms being shipped from Iran to Syria, she explained that the United States expects the Security Council's Iran Sanctions Committee ("1737 Committee") to investigate this information on an urgent basis and take appropriate action. Due to the scope and serial nature of these reports, she said, the matter is of grave concern to the Council.

¶3. UK Deputy Perm Rep Parham also called the find a matter of serious concern and said the 1737 Committee should investigate this "pattern of violations." France Political Counselor Bonne said the arms shipment would worsen tensions in the region and highlighted the fact that it was not an isolated incident. He pointed to IRISL's role in these recent violations and noted that the 1737 Committee had already called on states to exercise vigilance with respect to IRISL. The Committee should do more, he said, than just "write letters to which there are no replies."

¶4. Russian Deputy Perm Rep Dolgov said that the 1737 Committee should investigate, but noted that the foreign

ministers of Iran and Syria had both denied publicly these allegations. He pointed to Israel's assertion that there was a violation of UNSCR 1701's ban on transfers to non-state actors in Lebanon and that this incident must be seen in its proper context. He also suggested that the many letters Lebanon has sent on alleged violations should also be considered in that context. Chinese Deputy Perm Rep Liu and Mexican Perm Rep Heller both said that the Council should not discuss the matter until the Committee considers it.

¶5. Libyan counselor Gebreel claimed that Israel's letter was part of a "systematic attempt" to divert attention from the Goldstone Report, with the aim of encouraging the UN to turn a blind eye to Israel's violations of international law. Asserting that maritime authorities in the two ports involved -- Damietta, Egypt and Latakia, Syria -- had denied that arms were being shipped, he called Israel's boarding of the ship to be an act of "piracy" and further alleged that Israel was not within its rights to conduct the inspection.

¶6. Japanese Perm Rep Takasu, chair of the 1737 Committee, said the Committee had a duty to deal with this issue. He added that the Israel mission intended to send a formal report to the Committee in the coming days. (NOTE: The Israeli mission has told USUN that they plan to submit a detailed report to the Committee sometime early the week of November 9. END NOTE.)
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